



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS  
Washington, D.C. 20231  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/708,309	11/07/2000	Patti C. Gilmer	FPC3 (6208.tba)	1250

7590 01/13/2003

Kenneth Southall  
Troutman Sanders LLP  
600 Peachtree Street NE  
Suite 5200  
Atlanta, GA 30308-2216

EXAMINER

WRIGHT, ANDREW D

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3617

DATE MAILED: 01/13/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/708,309

Applicant(s)

GILMER, PATTI C.

Examiner

Andrew Wright

Art Unit

3617

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) [X] Responsive to communication(s) filed on amendment filed 11/4/02.
2a) [X] This action is FINAL. 2b) [ ] This action is non-final.
3) [ ] Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under Ex parte Quayle, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) [X] Claim(s) 1,2 and 4-17 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) [X] Claim(s) 15 is/are allowed.
6) [X] Claim(s) 1,2,4-14,16 and 17 is/are rejected.
7) [ ] Claim(s) \_\_\_ is/are objected to.
8) [ ] Claim(s) \_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) [ ] The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) [ ] The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_ is/are: a) [ ] accepted or b) [ ] objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
11) [ ] The proposed drawing correction filed on \_\_\_ is: a) [ ] approved b) [ ] disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
12) [ ] The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) [ ] Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) [ ] All b) [ ] Some \* c) [ ] None of:
1. [ ] Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. [ ] Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. [ ] Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
14) [ ] Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) [ ] The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
15) [ ] Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) [ ] Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) [ ] Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) [ ] Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) \_\_\_\_\_.
4) [ ] Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). \_\_\_\_\_.
5) [ ] Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) [ ] Other:

Art Unit: 3617

## DETAILED ACTION

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

1. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

2. Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. Claim 17 recites different modes of flexure due to the flexion channels on one side and the enhanced buoyancy regions on the other. This is not supported by the original disclosure.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1, 4-14, and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Darcy et al. (US 5,823,838) in view of Grunstein et al. (US 6,260,199) and Morner (US 2,389,735). Regarding claim 1, Darcy discloses, in line 55 of column 6 through line 3 of column 7, in lines 45-65 of column 16, and in figures 20 - 22, a flotation suit that comprises a form-fitting torso covering with pockets that receive and retain buoyant material. Darcy discloses that the buoyant material may be in the form of a

Art Unit: 3617

unitary element comprising a base sheet of buoyant material with integrally attached raised portions. It can be seen from figure 20 that the raised portions are substantially thicker than the base sheet. Darcy teaches that the element is placed in the pocket of the torso garment. Darcy shows in figures 21 and 22 that the plurality of raised portions includes an upper torso portion and a lower torso portion. Darcy does not disclose that the form fitting torso covering has a right arm covering, a left arm covering, a right leg covering, and a left leg covering. Grunstein discloses a bodysuit with added flotation, similar to that of Darcy. Grunstein, however, discloses a form fitting torso covering that is more than just a vest. Grunstein discloses a form fitting torso covering that also has a right arm covering, a left arm covering, a right leg covering, and a left leg covering. Reasons for this are to provide tight fit when the user is in the water, so that the suit does not slide around on the user. Another reason for adding the extra covering is for thermal protection of the wearer. Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Darcy by adding a right arm covering, a left arm covering, a right leg covering, and a left leg covering as taught by Grunstein.

5. Both Darcy and Grunstein discuss the importance and functionality of articulation zones (i.e. flexion channels), with Darcy going into great details about their use. Darcy does not disclose flexion channels on a side opposite the plurality of raised portions. Grunstein appears to teach crease lines on both sides of the flotation element (column 4, lines 50-60). Grunstein also teaches the practice of experiment and testing to determine the optimal location for the crease lines. Morner distinctly shows a

Art Unit: 3617

floatation element that has a backsheet with raised elements and articulation zones on both the inner and outer surfaces. The need for articulation is known, as evidenced by Darcy and Grunstein's disclosure, and the skilled artisan would be motivated to locate flexion channels wherever such channels would be most beneficial as taught by Grunstein. Using the modified invention of Darcy as a starting point, and the disclosure of Morner as a teaching, it will be within the scope of normal experimentation to devise flexion channels on the inner surface of the backsheet. Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify the invention of Darcy by adding at least one flexion channel on the inner surface of the backsheet. The motivation would be to permit the least encumbered movement by the wearer.

6. The elements of claims 4-8 are included in claim 1.

7. Regarding claim 9, Darcy discloses a fastenable torso opening.

8. Regarding claim 10, Darcy discloses that the torso opening is a fastenable chest opening.

9. Regarding claim 11, Darcy does not disclose a fastenable back opening.

Grunstein discloses a flotation swimsuit that comprises a torso garment with a pocket that retains a unitary flotation element, the element comprising portions of differing thickness. Grunstein's swimsuit has a zippered back opening. Grunstein teaches that the swimsuit is designed for use with a child, and that the back opening facilitates dressing the child. Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Darcy by using a

Art Unit: 3617

zippered back opening as taught by Grunstein. The motivation would be to accommodate a child.

10. Regarding claim 12, Darcy discloses that the fastenable torso opening includes a zipper.

11. Regarding claim 13, Darcy in view of Grunstein does not disclose the recited method steps. The method steps recited in claim 13, however, are inherent in the manufacture and use of the modified suit of Darcy. Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to devise the claimed method steps based upon manufacture and usage of the modified suit of Darcy. The motivation would be to manufacture and use the suit.

12. Regarding claim 16, and as discussed with respect to claim 1, the skilled artisan would be motivated to experiment and test with different locations of flexion channels as taught by Grunstein. Using the modified invention of Darcy as a starting point, it would be within the scope of normal experimentation to devise a flexion channel that does not correspond with a low section on the opposite side of the buoyant material. Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to further modify the invention of Darcy by adding at least one flexion channel that does not correspond with a low section on the opposite side of the buoyant material. The motivation would be to permit the least encumbered movement by the wearer.

13. Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the modified invention of Darcy as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of

Art Unit: 3617

Khanamirian (US 6,235,661). Darcy does not disclose a fabric sheet of the pocket being laminated to the flotation element. Khanamirian discloses in figures 2 the practice of laminating pocket fabric to the enclosed flotation element. Khanamirian teaches that the lamination produces an ergonomically contoured design which provides the wearer superior fit, form, function, protection, and is aesthetically pleasing. Therefore it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the invention of Darcy by using the lamination taught by Khanamirian.

***Allowable Subject Matter***

14. Claim 15 is allowed.

***Response to Arguments***

15. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 5, 7, 13, and 14 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

***Conclusion***

16. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any

Art Unit: 3617


extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

17. Any inquiry concerning this communication should be directed to examiner Andrew D. Wright at telephone number (703) 308-6841. The examiner can normally be reached Monday-Friday from 9:00 - 5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, S. Joe Morano, can be reached at (703) 308-0230. The fax number for official communications is 703-872-9326 for before final proceedings and 703-872-9327 for after final proceedings. The fax number for the examiner for unofficial communications is 703-746-3548.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist at (703) 308-1113.

Andrew D. Wright  
Patent Examiner  
Art Unit 3617



S. JOSEPH MORANO  
SUPERVISOR  
TEC: 308-0230  
EXAMINER  
300